



Social Security Advisory Board

Kim Hildred, Chair
Henry J. Aaron
Bob Joondeph
Jagadeesh Gokhale
Nancy J. Altman

400 Virginia Avenue, SW
Suite 625
Washington, DC 20024
202-475-7700

Claire Green, Staff Director

February 4, 2019

Bipartisan Advisory Board urges Social Security to collect better data to assure that beneficiaries have the right payee to help manage their benefits

WASHINGTON, DC – The Social Security Advisory Board (Board) has a long history of examining and recommending improvements to the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) representative payee program, which assigns a person or program to help beneficiaries who need assistance manage their benefits. Following its 2016 Call to Action report, in 2018, the Board recommended that the SSA “research and evaluate the order of preference for payee selection.” Soon after, Congress enacted the *Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2018*; Section 204 requires the Commissioner to conduct a review and reassessment of how payees are selected and replaced.

As the population is aging, family size is shrinking, and family structure is changing, current preference lists that SSA uses to select payees may well have become outdated. The Board has found no empirical research on what preference ordering is optimal. If SSA lacks data necessary to inform changes to the selection process, then it should move expeditiously to collect it. Consistent with federal initiatives to improve federal evidence-based policymaking, the Board strongly urges SSA to strengthen its capacity to collect and use all appropriate programmatic data to inform and support decisions about the payee program.

Click [here](#) to read the comments submitted to the Federal Register on behalf of the Board in response to SSA’s notice and request for comment [83 Fed. Reg. 64422 (December 14, 2018), Docket No. SSA-2018-0048].